

# The Mystery of Hartley House

By CLIFFORD S. RAYMOND

Illustrated by IRWIN MYERS

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## THE HAUNTED POOL.

Synopsis.—Dr. John Michelson, just beginning his career, becomes resident physician and companion of Homer Sidney at Hartley house. Mr. Sidney is an American, a semi-invalid, old and rich and very desirous to live. Mrs. Sidney is a Spanish woman, dignified and reticent. Jed, the butler, acts like a privileged member of the family. Hartley house is a fine old isolated country place, with a murder story, a "haunted pool," and many watch-dogs, and an atmosphere of mystery. The "haunted pool" is where Richard Dobson, son of a former owner of Hartley house, had killed his brother, Arthur Dobson. Jed begins operations by locking the doctor in his room the very first night. Doctor John fixes his door so he can't be locked in. He meets Isobel, daughter of the house, and falls in love at first sight. In the night he finds the butler drunk and holding Mrs. Sidney by the wrist. He interferes. Mrs. Sidney makes light of it. John buys a revolver. John overhears Jed telling Mrs. Sidney he will have his way. In reply she says she will not hesitate to kill him. Mrs. Sidney asks John to consent to the announcement of his engagement to Isobel. The young people consent to the make-believe engagement. Later they find it is to head off Jed, who would marry Isobel. Jed tries to kill John, but the matter is smoothed over. John, though "engaged" to Isobel, conceals his love. Mr. Sidney visits a nearby prison and has Dobson, the murderer, pointed out. Queer stories of the "haunted pool" are told.

## CHAPTER V—Continued.

"And tell said stories of the deaths of kings," said Jed, drawing his chair nearer to the fire and spreading out his hands before it. He was drinking more rationally now, sipping his wine instead of gulping it. He had arrived at his desired state and wished to maintain it.

Mr. Sidney seemed to feel a comfortable glow as Jed drank. There was no doubt that by suggestion he obtained physical sensations of stimulation and joviality.

"If we had a ghost," said Mr. Sidney, "it would walk on such a night."

The wind made an extraordinary attack upon the windows as he spoke and sucked a soughing sound from the chimney.

"Tell the doctor the story of the pool," Mr. Sidney said to Jed. "We are in the comfortable werewolf state. Let's have our legend. Do you want to add a shiver to your contentment, doctor?" he asked.

"I want to hear the story," I said. "So do I, once again," said Mr. Sidney, "on such a night."

"This place once belonged to a family named Dobson," said Jed.

"It was a very old family—for American families," said Mr. Sidney. "Came over in 1640," said Jed. "English Puritans from Holland," said Mr. Sidney. "Go ahead, Jed. I shan't interrupt."

"After the capture of New Amsterdam from the Dutch by the English, the Dobsons came down from the north and bought this manor-house from the Dutch family that had it. Then the Dobsons lived here in a simple fashion."

"They renamed it Hartley house for their father, who was Hartley Dobson. That's its name now."

"I don't want to break in unnecessarily," I said, "but where do you get your information, Jed?"

"It's all in records in the library," he answered, "and if I am going to tell the story I want a fair chance. . . . A lot of generations of Dobsons lived here. There was always a Dobson family in the house, and the property came down to the generation that made this story. There were two boys in that family—a half century ago—the sons of James and Henrietta Dobson."

"Henrietta Dobson died when her son Richard was nine years old and her other son Henry was seven years old. James Dobson died two years later, and the boys were parentless. This family was an argument against families."

"That's one of the heterodox notions I have instilled in an innocent mind," said Mr. Sidney. "Jed, you must not repeat phrases in your narratives. You parrot things and try to pass them as observations."

"You'll have him surly in a moment," I suggested, "and then where is the story?"

"I never knew him surly," said Mr. Sidney, "and he could not be in his genial wine."

Jed showed the flicker of a malignant glance in my direction and went on with his story evenly and good-naturedly.

"I don't pretend to have all the details or to understand it," he said; "but from what I learn, Richard Dobson, the elder brother, was strong and brutal. Henry Dobson, the younger brother, was frail and sensitive. I guess they hated each other from the cradle."

"Dick, when he was four and Henry was two, found ways of tormenting his younger brother. The best thing Henry ever had from Richard was contempt."

"I have known families of that na-

ture," said Mr. Sidney. "Our conventions teach us to regard a family tie as a sacrament. In many cases it is only an odious obligation leading to tragedy."

"Dick knew all of Henry's weaknesses," Jed continued. "Sometimes he would torture him physically, by twisting his wrist or rolling him over on the ground when young girls were around. Sometimes he would torture him without laying hands on him."

"Dick was a thick-headed brute, but he had a genius for cruelty. When their parents died and the boys approached their majority, Henry was almost an imbecile for fear of Dick."

"Dick wanted then to get his inheritance and go out into the world, but the estate was left in trust until both boys were of age. Dick came of age and was obliged to wait two years for Henry."

I was astonished by the succinct and philosophical brevity of this ignorant man's narrative. Mr. Sidney was at ease in his chair with his eyes closed and a placid expression of pleasure on his face. Jed was active in gesticulation as he talked. That was the effect of the wine. The wind continued to pull at the chimney and scold in the corners.

"Jed has read a great deal to me," said Mr. Sidney without opening his eyes. "I think he has become theistic."

"Well," said Jed, "to shorten a story, when Dick, being twenty-one, found that he had to wait two more years for Henry, he became more brutal than ever. In some way or other, the night of the murder the two brothers happened to meet in a tavern in a village not far from Hartley house. Henry did not want to go home with his brother, but they both got drunk and they started to walk home together."

"No one has been able to do much more than guess at what took place, but it was known that Richard was a brute and that Henry was scared of him but was not a coward. They must have had a violent quarrel."

"There was a cottage near the pool. The only person in it at the time was a little girl, whose parents were not at home. She was awakened by cries and swearing. She said that she heard one man say: 'They'll find you dead in the morning.' Then she heard sounds of a struggle and was scared and hid her head under the bedclothes."

"When her parents came home she told them what she had heard, and they went out with a lantern to the place from which the noise came. They found parts of Henry's clothing. The next day Richard was found, ten miles away, still drunk. He confessed that he had killed his brother in a drunken rage."

"Afterward he said that he hadn't, but he admitted that there had been a quarrel. It was a most celebrated case."

"The moon went behind another cloud, and the figure on the bank became indistinct. It almost disappeared. I stood still, with apprehensive shudders working up and down my spine. The phenomenon was outrageous and unbelievable. The moonlight flashed out again for an instant. I saw the figure again but persuaded or tried to persuade myself that I did not see it, to say to myself that it was a bush twisted into extravagant shape by my imagination."

The moon went under a great dark cloud. I made a moral and physical retreat. I did not run. That would have been an honest confession and expression of desire. I was hypocritical and walked, but my moral defeat was complete.

There was a man at the haunted pool.

I had seen him and something had deterred me from speaking to him, finding out who he was or why he was there.

A really violent change came into our lives. A suggestion that Mr. Sidney go to the South for the winter was acted upon, and within a month I was separated from the place and people so important in my affections. Doctor Brownell had been called to Hartley house by Mr. Sidney's discouraging condition. Our invalid had overtaxed himself the evening he displayed such activity in his room, such unusual strength and agility. The following morning he was almost in collapse. I was alarmed and telephoned Doctor Brownell, who came out at once.

"You will see his will pull him through," he said. "If it were not for that, I should be alarmed. He is very low."

"I blame myself for permitting the unusual exertion," I said. "My judgment was deluded, I think, by my happiness at seeing him so strong. He really seemed strong. It did not seem fictitious or unnatural."

Doctor Brownell said that the phenomenon was not new in his experience with Mr. Sidney's case.

"I have had it six years," he said, "and this is the sixth time he has gone from unexplained and unnatural strength to extreme and dangerous weakness. And always in the fall—somewhere about this time. Each time I have seen his will assert itself and strengthen him in his exhaustion."

When I said good-night to Mr. Sidney and Jed I did not go to my room. A little alcoholic stimulant to one unaccustomed to it will break down routine.

I went to the library to select a book

and take it to my room. The fire in the library was burning cheerfully. The wind had a clear sweep at the windows. To a slightly exhilarated perception the circumstances were alluringly comfortable.

I found a good book, but lost the inclination to go to my room. I sat down in a comfortable chair, having turned off all the lights except that of the reading lamp. The library was large, and when the reading lamp alone was lighted there were deep shadows and the room was largely in darkness.

I read for a while and then fell asleep. I had no intention of doing that, but drowsiness came irresistibly and I was gone before I could force myself to go to bed.

It was two o'clock when I awoke. The wind had died down. I felt restless and uneasy, not being accustomed to falling asleep in this fashion. The sensation of waking up and having perceptions struggle to establish not only location but identity was unpleasant.

I started then for bed but stopped at the main door of the house on my way. I went to look to the fastenings and found that Jed, whose duty it was to close the house, had forgotten to lock and bar the door.

It was this incident of seeing the chain hanging down and of going to the door that suggested a cure for my unpleasant restlessness after the nap in the library. I opened the door and went outside for a walk.

The moon in its last quarter was rising in a cloud-filled sky. There was light one instant and then dark. I expected the dogs to join me, but none came.

A challenge arose within me—to go down by the way toward the haunted pool. It was the moral taunt of a suggested cowardice. I thought of the place and of all I had been told of it; and the instinctive apprehension, perceptible as I stood on the steps to the entrance, provoked the challenge.

It seemed imperative. It would have been a moral retreat to go back into the house, as would have been sensible, lock the door and go to bed. That seemed like backing down in the face of an inviting danger. These challenges are inconsequential, but they seem important to character.

I did not have the real moral courage, which was to turn my back on the invitation and go indoors. I went down the steps to prove to myself my confidence in myself—thereby disproving it.

As I neared the pool, the moon went behind a cloud. I came to a clump of bushes. The moon came from behind its cover. There was a gentle flood of returning light. I was in, or rather behind, a screen of trees and brush. The pool was fifty feet away.

At the edge of the pool a man was revealed in the moonlight. He leaned on a stick.

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The day I called Doctor Brownell had been too concerned and alarmed to pay much attention to anyone but Mr. Sidney and did not observe until toward evening that Jed was malignantly unfriendly again in his attitude toward me. Finally he made it apparent by a bit of vicious insolence. I had determined never again to take hold of that nettle gingerly but to clutch it.

"What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"There is a plague of officiousness about here, or has been since you came," he said. "You locked the front door last night some time, didn't you?"

"I found it open this morning, and after I had walked about the grounds



"Do You Have to Be Judge of My Habits?"

for a while I came in and threw the bolt," I told him.

He seemed unpleasantly astonished—jolted and disturbed.

"You were abroad last night!" he exclaimed.

"You had locked me in, I know," I said, "—or thought you had. I found my door bolted when I went back to my room. I wasn't in it when you bolted it," I added. "I was asleep in the library. When I awakened I went outside for a moment. The door was unfastened. I bolted it when I came in."

Jed was more disturbed, and he showed it.

"Where did you go?" he asked.

"I walked around," I said, "down by the river."

His discomposure became acute. He looked sick.

"Where were the dogs?" I asked. "I didn't see any."

He tried to smile.

"They were with me," he said. "I was out, and you locked me out. That's why I have been so indignant. I came back and found I had to break into the house. I was in a hurry. You wouldn't have liked it yourself."

"I don't like it myself. I don't like being locked in my room. I'll not have it. I thought I had given you to understand that it would not be tolerated. I do not want to annoy the family by complaints, but I will not endure that."

"Well, you can see the occasion for it. You were loose last night, and your conscientious officiousness made trouble. I knew your type, the moment I set eyes on you. I said here's a trouble-making person with a duty. You show it. Of course, you had to bolt that door. You could not assume that it was open for a purpose. No thought of anybody that might be outside! I knew you. That's why we're safe only when you are locked in your room."

"Well, I'll not have it," I insisted, "and you can understand that. It is flat. Why do you have to run around the grounds at night?"

"Do you have to be judge of my habits? If you do, it may satisfy you to know that I frequently have many duties to perform for Mr. Sidney in the night. I frequently drink too much wine. I frequently walk around the grounds to clear my head and be able to do what is needed by Mr. Sidney."

My mind had jumped to a conclusion.

"Were you at the pool last night?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

He was very ugly.

"You seem to be a Paul Pry," he said. "You ought to be manacled."

I was not interested in Jed. I was thinking of my figure at the pool. As embodied in Jed it did not fascinate me.

"It might have been in Montevideo."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Nearly All Water.

Mushrooms generally consist of 90 per cent water, but the remaining 10 per cent is more nutritious than bread.

## PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT

### Greenwood's Appeal to Ireland



Sir Hamar Greenwood, chief secretary for Ireland, (portrait herewith) says: "There has never been a time when the Irish executive, the British cabinet, and the house of commons were more desirous of settling this age-long Irish question and we are ready to welcome representation from every quarter as to the best method of solution."

According to the preponderance of press representation there are three voices from Ireland that are gradually making themselves heard above the confusion. Two of them proceed from the two extreme Irish factions: one from the Orangemen of the north who insist upon maintaining the Irish system as it is; and the other from the Sinn-Felers, who demand independence. Between these policies lies the middle course of dominion government, backed by the Irish Dominion league. The founder of this league and leader of moderate Irish

Nationalist opinion, Sir Horace Plunkett, is authority for the statement in a public speech that the situation in Ireland is more gravely alarming than it has been within his knowledge of sixty years. The leader of the Unionists, Sir Edward Carson, has expressed a very similar view. He said during a debate in the house of commons that he had never known anything like the state of anarchy prevailing.

Sir Hamar Greenwood appealed to all parties and creeds to support the government, and predicts an even worse situation than the present if his appeal is not heeded.

### Curtis Renominated in Kansas

Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas has been nominated in the Republican primary for re-election. Public attention was directed to this primary because there was a feeling that it was in a way a test of the sentiment in the Sunflower state about the industrial relations court law that calls for compulsory arbitration of disputes when the public welfare is involved. Gov. Henry J. Allen, the author of this unique Kansas law, was also a candidate for nomination for re-election. There seemed to be an idea that Allen and Curtis were in the same boat and would sink or swim together. Allen's victory was sweeping.

Senator Curtis was elected to the United States senate in 1907 to fill out the unexpired term of Senator J. R. Burton, resigned, succeeding Senator A. W. Benson, appointed ad interim. In 1912 he received the popular vote for the senatorial nomination, but lost under the district plan. In 1913 Kansas adopted the direct primary and in 1914 he gained the nomination over Senator J. L. Bristow and in the election defeated Neeley, Democrat, and Murdock, Progressive.

Senator Curtis is a "native son," having been born in Topeka in 1890. He got his schooling in the Topeka schools, studied law in Topeka and was admitted to the bar in 1881. He was elected to the Fifty-third congress and served eight successive terms.



### New Law Retires Gen. J. E. Stuart



The provisions of the new civil service retirement law resulted in the discharge by Postmaster General Burleson's orders of 150 postal employees at Chicago and their efforts at reinstatement attracted the attention of the whole country. The result of their efforts was that 11 of the 150 have been notified that recommendations for their reappointment had been filed with the civil service commission.

One of the veterans not named among the 11 is Gen. James E. Stuart, aged seventy-eight, chief postal inspector for the last four decades.

At twenty he rescued his country's flag in the battle of Stone River. He was cited twice during the Civil war for bravery, and was mustered out in command of a regiment. A year later he entered the postal service but still kept up his military work. In the fifty years following he became one of the best known postal

inspectors in the United States, and climbed to the rank of brigadier general in the Illinois national guard.

He entered the postal service in 1866, in charge of the second railway mail car in service. In 1876 he was appointed to his present office, a position he has held continuously for forty-four years.

"I have the record for continuous employment in the service of my government," he said. "I have been in that service for sixty-six years, fifty-four of which I have spent in the postoffice."

### Ferris Defeats Gore for Senate

Representative Scott Ferris has defeated Senator Thomas P. Gore for the Democratic nomination for United States senator from Oklahoma. The primary contest had features out of the ordinary which attracted widespread attention. In the first place, Senator Gore is blind and it has been held in Oklahoma that a sentimental vote would keep him in his seat for years. He has served since 1907 and his majority in 1914 was over 46,000. In the second place Senator Gore was the author of the Gore resolution of 1916, warning Americans not to travel on belligerent ships, which was decisively beaten in the senate. Later he voted for the Lodge reservations to the League of Nations.

Scott Ferris on the other hand, has been a warm supporter of the presidential policies in the lower house. So the political sharps profess to see considerable significance in his victory over Senator Gore.

Representative Ferris was elected to the Sixtieth congress and is serving his seventh successive term. Before the Republicans gained control of the house he was chairman of the important public lands committee.

